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# THE ICELANDER THORFINN KARLSEFN

WHO VISITED THE WESTER
HEMISPHERE IN 1007

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FROM

J. Bunford Samuel

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Emma Phelps Samuels

THE ICELANDER

# THORFINN KARLSEFNI

WHO VISITED THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE IN 1007

PRINTED FOR PRIVATE DISTRIBUTION BY
J. BUNFORD SAMUEL

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✓ *




J. Bunford Samuel,
Philadelphia

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AT THE WASHINGTON SQUARE PRESS
PHILADELPHIA, U. S. A.

TO MY WIFE ELLEN

WHO MADE POSSIBLE THE EXISTENCE OF THE STATUE OF THORFINN KARLSEFNI THROUGH HER BEQUEST TO THE FAIRMOUNT PARK ART ASSOCIATION

# CHRONOLOGY

## A SHORT CHRONOLOGY OF THORFINN KARLSEFNI

Copied from Hawk's book.

Translated by G. M. Gathorne-Hardy, F.R.G.S.

There was a man named Thord, who lived in Hofda in Hofdastrand. He married Fridgerda, daughter of Thori-Hyma and of Fridgerda, daughter of Kjarval, King of the Irish. Thord was a son of Bjorn Byrdusmor, son of Thorvald-Hrygg, son of Asleick, son of Bjorn-Ironside, son of Ragnar-Shaggy-Breeches. They had a son called Snorri. He married Thorhild-Rype, a daughter of Thord Gelli. Their son was Thord-Horsehead and he had a son called Thorfinn Karlsefni, who lived in the north at Reynisness in Skagafjord, as it is now called. Besides being of good stock, Karlsefni was a wealthy man. His mother's name was Thorunn. He was in the cruising trade, and had a good reputation as a sailor.



- STATUE OF LIEF ERICSSON - COMMONWEALTH AVE. - BOSTON -

# FOREWORD

The old theory of fire—that wherever there was smoke, there was flame—very aptly is illustrative of controversies regarding the discovery and settlement of continents.

In the case of the Icelander, Thorfinn Karlsefni, this controversy is very prominent.

Almost every historian who has written a history of the Western Hemisphere, has stumbled over a Norseman or an Icelander who in some way reached this Hemisphere.

In Adam of Bremen's Book, "Discipler Insularum Aqualonis," published in 1595.

In John Fiske's history called "The Discovery of America."

In Professor William Hovgaard's romance of "The Voyages of the Norsemen to America."

And the definition given about Vinland in the latest edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica.

And, quite recently, "The Norse Discoveries of America—The Vineland Sagas," by G. M. Gathorne-Hardy, F.R.G.S.

All mention Leif Ericsson and Thorfinn Karlsefni as the earliest discoverers of America.

The unsettled question seems to be, the exact location

where they landed. This, in turn, reaches from Cape Cod to Long Island Sound, and names the land Vinland and Wineland, because grape vines were found growing on the mainland. If these historians would study the ocean currents which Hovgaard and Hardy have done in a casual way, they would have found a sort of Northern Gulf Stream which for ages drifted close to the Massachusetts shore—piling up driftwood which came from the Arctic Sea. Small boats such as the Norsemen and Icelanders used were undoubtedly carried by this current, the same as the driftwood, and we can only conjecture where they landed, for nothing is left to tell the story, except in Thorfinn's case. Providing the story of the Fletcher stone can be verified. The word settler had something to do with my choice, also, for Thorfinn did settle where he landed and remained some two years until driven out by savages. Also, his child Snorri was born during his sojourn in America, which undoubtedly was the first white child born in this country.

I have no misgivings over my choice—quite to the contrary, for every latest history of America seems to confirm the story of Thorfinn Karlsefni.

I chose for the sculptor of Thorfinn—Einar Jonsson, a native of Iceland. And he certainly has modelled a typical Viking—being descended from the Vikings.

I hope my readers will agree with me that I have not erred in their conviction.



- STATUE OF THORFINN KARLSEFNI ON PEDESTAL IN PARK -

# THORFINN KARLSEFNI

Why THORFINN KARLSEFNI was chosen to represent
The First Settler in the Western Hemisphere
And the remarkable bequest made by my wife
for Statuary
Emblematical of the settlement of our great Country.

THE BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to my husband all the residue and remainder of my estate, real and personal, of every kind for the term of his natural life, and after his death, I give, devise and bequeath the same to the Commissioners of Fairmount Park, to spend the income thereof in the following manner.

According to the official map issued by the Park Commissioners, there is a space of Two Thousand (2000) feet commencing from the Beacon Light or last boat house to the Girard Avenue Bridge. On the edge of this ground bordered by the Schuylkill River is a stone bulkhead. On top of this embankment it is my will to have erected at distances of one hundred (100) feet apart, on high granite pedestals of uniform shape and size, statuary emblematic of the History of America, ranging in time from the earliest settler of America to the present Era, arranged in chronological order, the earliest period

at the South end, and going on to the present time at the North end;

And when all the statues are in place, the income to be spent in buying Statuary and Fountains to decorate the Park according to the judgment of the Commissioners.

In getting designs for the Statues, it is my desire that notices be inserted in the leading newspapers of the world, asking for designs, and offering to pay expenses for sending and returning the same, but not to offer any special premium, the one chosen to receive all the money offered in the proposal.

I nominate and appoint my husband Joseph Bunford Samuel to be the Executor of this my last will and testament and Trustee for all purposes named herein.

CODICIL.

I, Ellen Phillips Samuel, revoke and make null and void my appointment of the Fairmount Park Commission to be Trustee of my Bequest, and appoint instead The Fairmount Park Art Association to receive and administer said Bequest in the manner described in the body of my will.

THE ADJUDICATION OF WILL BY JUDGE GEST
filed Dec. 9, 1914.

"The foregoing provisions of the will constituted Joseph Bunford Samuel testamentary trustee, and not merely life tenant, and consequently under the Act of

Assembly of May 17, 1871, Stew. Purd. 1133, the legacy in remainder to the Fairmount Park Art Association is not legally taxable until the death of Mr. Samuel; he has however as Executor paid the Tax on the remainder interest, and the sealed and countersigned receipt therefor in the sum of $21,382.84 was produced to the Auditing Judge, being tax on $674,061.15, after the deduction of the life estate appraised at $223,876.18.

Counsel for the Fairmount Park Art Association expressed his appreciation of Mr. Samuel's magnanimous action in this as in other matters concerning the bequest."

The usual commission paid to executors was also omitted.

November 14, 1913.

Acceptance of the bequest by the Fairmount Park Art Association.

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the Fairmount Park Art Association has received with much satisfaction, notice of the munificent bequest of Mrs. J. Bunford Samuel (Ellen Phillips Samuel) which will provide funds for a comprehensive and dignified treatment of a noble theme—the history of America symbolized in a system of Statuary in Fairmount Park, and which will ensure the continuance for all time on a generous scale of the influence of the Association in promoting the aims for which it exists.

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees gratefully accepts the bequest of Mrs. Samuel, and will carry out,

to the best of its ability, the wishes of the testatrix.

(Signed) Leslie W. Miller,
Secretary.

## The Selection of the man who was the earliest known Settler in the Western Hemisphere.

It was something of an undertaking to find the first Settler amongst the mass of historical names associated with the first discoverers of our country.

I had never given the matter a thought before, and started my inquiries with no knowledge of the subject at all. I read History after History, until I came to Fiske's History, "The Discovery of America." He certainly made plain many points regarding the early discoverers which put me on the path and interested me in trying to solve the question. The names of Leif Ericsson and Thorfinn Karlsefni appeared again and again, until it seemed hopeless to make a choice. When suddenly, I may say I was startled after reading a newspaper description of the Fletcher Stone discovered near Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, on which were letters the meaning of which was made clear by a translation by Henry Phillips, Jr., a brother of Mrs. Samuel, and Secretary of the American Philosophical Society of Philadelphia. His definition of it was "Hako's Son Addressed the Men." Haki and his wife were members of the expedition of Thorfinn Karlsefni, which was supposed to have



FULL-SIZE STAFF MODEL OF THE BALUSTRADE OF THE PROPOSED ELLEN PHILLIPS SAMUEL MEMORIAL, AS ERECTED BY THIS ASSOCIATION ON THE EAST RIVER DRIVE BELOW GIRARD AVENUE BRIDGE, IN FAIRMOUNT PARK. VIEW FROM THE RIVER-WALL.

Supposed Runic inscription near Yarmouth, Nova Scotia.

Photographed from a paper squeeze See Proc. Am. Phil. Soc. May 2nd 1884.



Scale of Inches 

landed near Cape Cod, Massachusetts, in the year 1007, and remained there for two years until driven away by the savages.

Tradition says that Leif Ericsson who had preceded Thorfinn some seven years, had landed on the same spot and erected huts to live in, but no huts were standing on the arrival of Thorfinn.

The version of Henry Phillips' translation herewith follows.

A STORY

## Of a supposed Runic Inscription at Yarmouth, Nova Scotia.

By Henry Phillips, Jr.

On the shore of the Bay of Fundy, opposite the town of Yarmouth, stands a rock weighing about four hundred pounds, which about the end of the last century was discovered by a man named Fletcher. It has been well known for nearly an hundred years, and those who dwell in its vicinity have always accepted it as a genuine relic of antiquity, no breath of suspicion ever having fallen upon it.

The glyphs thereon have been at various times copied and sent abroad to men of learning, who have made more or less attempts at deciphering them, more than one savant seeing traces of Semetic origin.

In 1875, a rubbing procured from the stone was

placed in my hands for investigation. Since that time I have carefully considered the circumstances of the case, and have become ultimately satisfied of its bona fide nature, that the inscription was neither a modern fraud nor the work of the wayward playfulness of the leisure hours of the sportive red-skin. Having become imbued with a belief that no deception was intended or practiced, I entered upon the study of the markings with a mind totally and entirely free from prejudice, so far from believing that the inscription was a relic of the pre-Columbian discovery of America, I had never given any credence to that theory.

I therefore approached the subject entirely unbiased in my opinion. In fact, somewhat prejudiced against the authenticity of any inscription on this continent, purporting to emanate from the hardy and intrepid Norsemen. The difficulty of interpreting these markings was greatly increased on account of the nature of the material on which the rubbing had been taken and the fact that in the Runic alphabets the letters frequently have many varying values and forms. But like as in a kaleidoscope, word after word appeared in disjointed forms, and each was in turn rejected until at last an intelligible word came forth, followed by another and another, until a real sentence with a meaning stood forth to my astonished gaze:

"Harkusson Men Varu"—"Hako's Son addressed the Men."

Upon examining further, I found that in the expedition of Thorfinn Karlsefni in 1007, the name of Haki occurs among those who accompanied him. I confess I was staggered by the remarkable coincidence and began to waver and the finishing touches were placed to my unbelief when I observed the map, and saw how short the distance was from Iceland to Greenland, compared with the stretch of water from Norway to Iceland. It seemed more probable that the fearless race that actually did cross the latter expanse of ocean were not likely to be discouraged from navigating the former. As to the reason why such a memento should be left of the visit, of course no definite answer can be given, but it is a fact well known that memorials were often made or erected, engraved or placed at localities where events had taken place, and the address of the Chieftain to the men may have been of some noteworthy matter, perhaps even to commemorate the fact of having landed at that spot.

In conclusion, I would say, that the circumstances are worthy of consideration, if not absolutely convincing.

As long as Mr. Phillips found out that a man named Haki and his wife actually belonged to Thorfinn's expedition, he made a mistake in translating the name as Haki's son addressed the men, for Haki had no son with him, only his wife. He also erred in supposing the inscription was Runic—it is not; the Runic alphabet is entirely different from the letters on the stone.

Also, Haki was a Scotchman, was a runner, not a Chieftain, and being a Scot, if he wrote the letters they must be Celtic. I am endeavoring to clear up this part of the story.

Later on, I found Rudyard Kipling's remarks about Thorfinn in his story of "The Phantom Rickshaw," as follows:

"Conceive yourself at the door of the world's treasure house, guarded by a child.

Till that evening Charles had spoken nothing that might not be within the experience of a Greek Galley Slave.

But now, or there was virtue in books, he had talked of some desperate adventure of the Vikings.

Of Thorfinn Karlsefni's sailing to Wineland, which is America, in the Ninth or Tenth Century, the battle in the harbor he had seen, and his own death he had described.

I might write the saga of Thorfinn Karlsefni, as it had never been written before, might tell the story of the first discovery of America, myself the discoverer."

In all the Historical Works reviewed by me, concerning the life and adventures of Thorfinn Karlsefni, I think Kipling's few words are very weird and opportune and quite wonderful.

To the Committee of the

Fairmount Park Art Association

Gentlemen:

In order that the early erection of the Statue I pro-

pose giving to your Association as a starter for the whole scheme of Statuary stated in my wife's bequest, I suggest the fund to be used for this first Statue, shall be the total net income of the estate of Mrs. Samuel for the year 1915, less $5000. Also that the first Statue be the Icelander, Thorfinn Karlsefni.

In conclusion—no one is more interested in presenting a handsome art work to your Association than I am, and with your coöperation, I trust to give the public as elegant a piece of Statuary as modern genius can execute.

I may add, no notice was taken by the Association after the meeting at which I presented my offer to erect the first Statue. From that time until the completion of Thorfinn, I underook the matter at my own risk.

A year passed before anything very definite happened, and I canvassed around seeking some knowledge of Sculptors here and abroad. It seemed that local Sculptors did not want to compete for the proposed Statue.

Finally, the Editor of the Scandinavian Foundation of America, at New York, suggested to me the name of an Icelander, Einar Jonsson, as a worthy sculptor, and sent me a copy of a letter written to him by Jonsson notifying me that he had sent a model of a Statue of Thorfinn that he had been working on over for a year. The model arrived shortly afterward and I placed it on

exhibition at an Art Gallery for inspection by my friends, and herewith give copies of letters in the matter.

The American Scandinavian Foundation,
25 West 45th St., New York.
May 25, 1915.

My dear Mr. Samuel:

May I suggest the great Icelandic sculptor, Einar Jonsson, as the proper artist to design the Thorfinn Karlsefni Statue? We are this week giving a benefit for the purpose of bringing bronzes of his work to America.

I enclose the article about him in the *Scandinavian Review.*

No artist could do the work with more feeling for his aim.

Very sincerely yours,
(Signed) Henry Goddard Leach.

Translation from Danish letter from Einar Jonsson to H. G. Leach, dated Reykjavik, Iceland, Jan. 3, 1917.

Dear Mr. Leach:

I am sending a large model of Thorfinn Karlsefni, by steamer *Bisp,* which leaves for New York today. The model is a metre high, and is made of Plaster Paris, so it must be handled carefully. I have had a very short time to make it in, as it was wanted so soon, but it matters little if it is not well finished off—such models never are.





The main thing is the position, the plastic art of the whole work, and the total impression.

The finishing off, and all the details will not appear until it is shown in the main work.

Also, the expression of the face, and the whole spiritual physiognomy will be completed then.

Then comes the clothing—it is not easy to determine how that should be done. I have studied that side of the matter very closely from the time some years ago when I made the Statue of Ingolf, and got information both from my countrymen, of whom many are specialists in that line, and from Professor Finner Jonsson and Dr. Valtyr Gudmundsson in particular. I also studied diligently with Prof. Siphus Muller, Director of the Oldnordisk Museum at Copenhagen. The latter told me that there are no exact descriptions in existence dating from that time or about 400 years before and after Ingolf, not even loose descriptions, and that I would come nearest to the truth by principally letting my fancy lead me, guided by the knowledge we have of clothing from the time before or after.

I followed his advice, for I must say that other gentlemen I spoke with concerning this matter disagreed about the question, as scientists often do.

But to pick out one piece of clothing from one age, and another from another, I considered quite out of the way, for in that manner no result would in any likelihood be correct.

It must also be remembered that the old Vikings were much more individual in their dressing, than people are now-a-days. They had no factories, and no fashions to make the clothes from; every individual more or less invented his own dress. And it has been pointed out in the old sagas or histories how peculiarly this or that person was dresesd.

As with Thorfinn, and with Ingolf, I dressed them as I considered most probable, based on a thorough study both with specialists and from the Northern collection of Antiquities, especially the one at home (in Reykjavik), which has many good specimens of clothing dating from ancient times, and I suited all of these to the saga and manner of life of the person, and the plastic art of the Statue in memory of the one for whom it was erected. For it should not be more or less a truly dressed doll only to represent the historical warrior clothing of his time, such would be an impossibility. These kinds of monuments need not be placed in the open air. They are more in place as antiquities for collections for collectors.

What Prof. Muller said is true. The nearest way to truth in this matter is reached by building upon the modest knowledge we have of these things, and guided by our fancy for the balance.

If the model I am sending you should be broken, you had better get an experienced plasterer to repair it. He must be particular in placing the head on correctly if it

should be broken. A very small thing can often do harm, and it is the position that counts in such a work.

And now, in conclusion, my good wishes for the *American Scandinavian Review,* and with best regards, I am,

Yours sincerely,
Einar Jonsson.

Whilst casting around for some further facts regarding the early settlers and discoverers of our country, I called on Professor John Bach McMaster, Professor of History at the University of Pennsylvania, and received the following letter from the Professor, which does not accord at all with Mrs. Samuel's bequest.

She distinctly says settlers of our country, therefore the Statues are limited to particular men, in fact, the Professor's scheme is absolutely outside the object asked for.

January 20, 1914.

Mr. J. Bunford Samuel,
Philadelphia, Pa.

Dear Mr. Samuel:

The provision in Mrs. Samuel's will that the time of beginning shall be the *earliest settlement* of our country makes it unnecessary to consider the discoverers of the coast.

As a working basis I have considered our history as that of a people starting on the edge of the Atlantic seaboard and rapidly overrunning the continent and would suggest three periods.

1. Occupation and setttlement of the Atlantic slope.

2. Occupation and settlement of the Mississippi valley.

3. Occupation and settlement of the Plains.

Our history has been made not so much by the acts of individual men as by those of great bodies of men. I would suggest therefore that the statues be not limited to particular men, but that some be devoted to types of men, as the explorer, the trapper, the frontiersman, etc.

THE STATUES

No. 1.—*Settlement in Pennsylvania*
Group: A Swede, a Hollander and William Penn; about their feet, luggage and implements to show they are settlers.

No. 2.—*Indian,* with a paddle, etc., watching the coming of the white man.

No. 3.—*The Trapper,* with furs, traps, etc., at his feet.

No. 4.—*Frontiersman*—The Commonwealth Builder, with plough and rifle.
(In panel on pedestal a log cabin, or stockaded fort.)

No. 5.—*Champlain,* Discovery of the Lakes.

No. 6.—*La Salle,* Discovery of the Mississippi.

No. 7.—*Expulsion of the French from the Ohio and Mississippi.* Washington on the Allegheny, or with Braddock.

No. 8.—*War for Independence,* Washington or some one else.

No. 9.—*Jefferson Louisiana Purchase,* 1803.

No. 10.—*Fulton—Introduction of Steamboat,* 1808, or *John Fitch and his Steamboat on the Delaware,* 1790.

No. 11.—*S.F.B. Morse*—Telegraph.

No. 12.—*Flatboatman on Mississippi.* Interstate Commerce. (Standing on deck holding end of huge sweep.)

No. 13.—*Lewis and Clark* (1805, '07). Exploration of Northwest—St. Louis to Oregon.

No. 14.—*Indians of the Plains.*

No. 15.—*Emigrant on the Plains.*

No. 16.—*Gold in California*—Settlement of Pacific Coast. "Forty-niner" washing gold in pan.

These are but suggestions rather hastily put down but will illustrate the general plan. The twenty statues should tell a continuous, well thought out story beginning with the settlement of the Atlantic Coast and

ending with that of California. Indians, great men, great women, great events should all have a place. Law, Medicine, Statesmanship should be represented. My purpose is to merely sketch out a plan.

(Signed) JOHN BACH MCMASTER.

*Some Letters from Eminent Scholars and the State Dept.*

*From Professor Amandus Johnson,* of the University of Pennsylvania, giving some details about the Vikings.

*From Professor Hovgaard,* of The Institute of Technology in Boston, replying to a letter I sent to him, asking if he could confirm Mr. Phillips translation of the Fletcher Stone inscription.

*From The State Department,* replying to an inquiry I made about the status of the Government of Iceland.

University of Penna.
Philadelphia, Pa.
July 21, 1918.

To the Chairman of the Park Commission.
Dear Sir:

Three weeks ago, at the request of Mr. Jonsson,

I wrote you a long letter concerning the history of Thorfinn Karlsefni and an explanation of certain points in connection with the Statue. This letter, unfortunately, disappeared in a terrible fire which destroyed part of my library and the Mss. of two of my new books. Since then I have been west making patriotic speeches among the Scandinavians and have been unable to write before now.

In the first place I should like to say that Thorfinn Karlsefni is as much an historical character as Thomas Morton, John Rising, Peter Minuet, Van Der Donck, Columbus or any of the other heroes of discovery and colonization; and that Thorfinn founded a colony somewhere on the North American coast is as historically certain as the fact that in the early 17th Century the English founded colonies in New England and Virginia, the Dutch in New York and the Swedes on the Delaware. There are writers who have doubts about the Norse voyages to America in the Tenth Century and the attempts of the Vikings to establish permanent settlements here, but happily John Fiske and other great American historians are not of this number . (See Fiske's "The Discovery of America"). If I can locate my article on the subject I shall send it to you. It gives the facts and refers to the Icelandic source. Unfortunately many of our historians are unable to read Icelandic or any of the other Scandinavian languages, hence their

doubts about the pre-Columbian discoveries and settlements in America by the Scandinavians.

In the next place a word about the statue. We have, of course, no pictures or other means of knowing *exactly* how Thorfinn looked. Such, however, is also the case with Charlemagne and many other historical characters and yet we have statues of several of them. Mr. Jonsson was therefore compelled to use his imagination and his statue of Thorfinn is an artistic conception of the ideal Viking as he is portrayed in the Icelandic sagas. The shield, sword and other equipment are those which a Viking of Thorfinn's stamp would carry. The shields and often the swords and belts of this period were decorated with legends or short verses written in runes. These verses were sometimes quotations from Gnomic lays or other sources, sometimes original productions of the artists who decorated the weapons. The verse on Thorfinn's shield is a tribute to Iceland. It reads in translation as follows:

> From the island of the north, of ice and fire,
> Of blossoming valleys and blue mountains,
> Of the waking sun (midnight sun) and the
> dreamy mists,—
> The home of the goddess of the northern lights.

The runes were nearly always written on a "serpent roll," similar to that used by Mr. Jonsson on the round



BACK VIEW OF STATUE OF THORFINN KARLSEFNI



shield. Very often the swords and shields were decorated with animals or other figures and scenes (similar to those used by Mr. Jonsson, from the Edda or some of the old legends. As I have studied in the Archives and museums of the Scandinavian north, where there are large collections of Icelandic shields and other weapons from the Viking period, I can testify to the general historical accuracy of the various details of the Thorfinn statue.

Personally, I consider the statue a wonderful work of art, superior to anything of its kind I have seen elsewhere—the statue of Leif Ericsson in Boston is a mere shadow, it seems to me, compared to it. All lovers of art in Philadelphia will surely be proud of it and thankful to Mr. Samuel for bringing over such an artist. For just as a great American artist would be more capable of conceiving an ideal representation of say—Daniel Boone or John Winthop than any foreigner, so surely a great Icelandic sculptor should be more capable of conceiving an ideal representation of a Viking, one of his ancestors, than any other artist of another race.

If the Park Commission should wish to have any other points in connection with the statue or the history of Thorfinn explained, I shall be glad to do so. I hope to write a short account of Thorfinn and his colony for one of our Sunday papers and will see to it that a copy is sent to you. Yours truly,

Amandus Johnson.

THORFINN KARLSEFNI

76 Edmont Street, Brookline, Mass.

Nov. 4, 1920.

Mr. J. Bunford Samuel,
1609 Spruce Street,
Philadelphia, Pa.

Dear Sir:

I am in receipt of your letter of November 1 and am much interested in what you say about the Yarmouth Stone, I am not acquainted with the translation of the inscription made by Mr. Phillips and would like to see it. In my book the inscription was given in the same way as on the stone now in the Museum at Yarmouth; it may be, as you say, upside down. It certainly is not Runic. I do not believe that Karlsefni was in Nova Scotia until I obtain positive evidence to confirm that theory.

In any case I am glad that you cause a statue of Karlsefni to be erected; he certainly made the first serious attempt at settling on the American continent and all people interested in this chapter of American history will be thankful to you. I am,

Yours very truly,

W. Hovgaard.



FIRST UNIT OF PLAN PROVIDED IN MRS. ELLEN SAMBS'S WILL SHOWING STATUE OF THORFINN KARLSEFNI TO BE PLACED ON RIVER DRIVE

Department of State, Washington.
July 25, 1919.

Mr. J. Bunford Samuel,
Sea Girt,
Monmouth County, New Jersey.
Sir:

The Department is in receipt of your letter dated July 11, 1919, inquiring whether Iceland is an independent Government or part of Denmark.

In reply you are informed that the Danish-Icelandic Treaty of Union, effective December 1, 1918, recognized the sovereignty of Iceland and provided for a personal union of the two countries under the King of Denmark.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,
For the Acting Secretary of State:
William Phillips,
Assistant Secretary.

*Regarding the Plaster Paris Model Erected of Pedestal and Exedra on Spot Proposed for the Erection of Statue.*

In order to convince the Park Commissioners what the Pedestals for the Statues would look like when placed in position in the Park, I consulted with George W. Norris Esq., about my eagerness to get something done in regard to the early erection of my Statue. He decided to secure the services of a young architect to

draw some plans for a Pedestal. He did so, and included an Exedra or seating bench around one side of the proposed Pedestal, which I thought was very clever.

The Park Commissioners allowed me to erect this construction, providing I would remove it in six months, which I did, and I am sure the many who saw it appreciated its beauty.

The Fairmount Park Art Association had their Architect prepare an elaborate model, taking in the entire landscape from the Sedgely Club House to Girard Avenue Bridge, a portion of which made in Plaster Paris being erected alongside of my work.

It was unfortunate for our Citizens that my Model was not accepted for the Exedra contained eight places for seats around each Pedestal, which meant 144 seats around the eighteen Statues to be erected. My model was Romanesque in design, and would set off all the Statues of all nationalities in better form than the Pedestal adopted. Some photos are herewith given of them.

The sculptor Einar Jonsson and his wife arrived in New York in July 1916. They stayed there for a few days, and then came here.

I secured rooms for them at an Apartment House, 40th and Parkside Avenue, overlooking the West Park.

The Fairmount Park Commissioners allowed the sculptor to use as his studio a small section of the old





RESIDENCE AND MUSEUM OF EINAR JONSSON - SCULPTOR, REYKJAVIK, ICELAND.

Merry-go-round building at the corner of Belmont and Parkside Avenues, which they fitted up for him, where he remained for two years until the Statue was finished.

It was then cast into Bronze by Bureau Brothers, and finally erected in its present position on November 20, 1920.

Below is given a descriptive letter about Einar Jonsson by his wife, also one written by himself.

Then come copies of the speeches made at the dedication services, and, finally, a letter of thanks from the Fairmount Park Art Association to me, and my reply, and a late criticism of Hardy's book, "The Norse Discoverers of America," by Prof. Julius E. Olson.

### A LITTLE SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF EINAR JONSSON.

Written by his wife, 1918.

Dear Mr. Samuel:

You ask me to explain Einar Jonsson's works, which I will gladly do in as few words as I can make their meaning clear.

First you must know something of what art and life mean to him. Nothing is produced hastily by him, but usually after years of conscientious study of his subject. Before any work leaves his hands he insists it must express the same truth in three ways:

The Idea (which is the spiritual conception); the Lines, and the Plastic Form in the whole composition.

Therefore, his finished work always expresses a complete harmony on these three points. His first conception of the outline regulates the whole composition. The different figures must all conform to these lines and are not allowed, by a single deflection, to mar the work.

Einar Jonsson was born in Iceland, where as a boy he gave proof of the sculptor that was in him by his wonderful carving on wood and bone. At the age of eighteen he went to Denmark, where for several years he studied in the Royal Academy, making a specialty of anatomy. Though much of his life has been spent in Scandinavia, he has also studied in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Holland and Italy, studying nearly two years in Rome.

But while improving these opportunities his main inspiration has been nature herself in all her living forms, which he sees as manifestations of that divine love and power in which all things have their origin.

He does not follow the Art of the Old Masters nor of the newer schools, but believes in keeping away from the beaten track, in freeing himself from tradition and conventionality, working out his own thought in his own way. At the same time being very tolerant for all those who work on different lines from his own, only feeling that Art once produced cannot be imitated. He says "Copying would fill the world with useless things."

For many years Einar Jonsson has exhibited his works in Europe (not trying to sell or profit by them).

He realizes how much his Art differs from European art, but hopes for the time (which must come) when friends and critics of Art will not be blinded by tradition but will see and realize that all true Art searches in different ways to express the same perfection.

In the year 1915 it was planned to publish a Monograph with illustrations on the Art and Philosophy of Einar Jonsson. We hope the difficult times have only deferred its publication.

In Iceland his countrymen have begun to build a Museum which is to contain the whole collection of his works past, present and future. In this collection he wishes the works known by numbers rather than names (as they formerly have), feeling that a name is insufficient to express the content of the work, the harmony and mystic language of the lines, which must be left to the intelligence of the spectator to divine.

Sincerely yours,

Per E.D.B. Anna Jonsson.

## LIFE OF EINAR JONSSON.

### Written by himself.

Of myself the most important thing to say is that I was born in 1874 here in Iceland, and from the time I began to think for myself I wanted nothing but to go my own ways, but a little later I saw also, that I must respect other people's ways; for I realized that if I did not respect the ways of others, I would get no joy from

my own. I saw then that these two things were necessary for an artist.

Art has been my great chastener and the bitterest scourge which such an unruly nature as mine needed. To be one thing as a man and another as an artist, that I quickly realized was impossible, for then both the artist and his work would be false. To run away from my art would be possible, but to be different from it, so long as I am creating it, that I cannot imagine. Therefore, if I wish to create that which I love—that which is good in one way or another—then I see the necessity of reaching the same as a man. Unfortunately, it is hard for me and others to follow our ideals, but before we reach them we cannot attain to the heights of art.

I wish that all may go their own ways, all find their own, each after his temperament. I go mine, and reap praise and blame, but I take both with equanimity. Money I do not reap, but so long as I can get fourteen kroner a month to pay for my little room, I am happy, and no one is likely to die of starvation in our somewhat chilly but glorious Iceland.

The State of Iceland has granted me a little sum of money to have my things moved home—all the works that I have made in the course of time. At present they are all hidden away in Copenhagen, but I cannot afford to pay storage on them any longer. All that is not sold becomes the property of the State of Iceland on the

condition that my countrymen provide a museum. Here comes the difficulty, however; there is no building, and it may be a year or perhaps ten years before one can be erected. It is not easy to be an artist in a poor country, which has really not the money to build a museum. Yet I am glad that my works are to be taken home, even if they must have their modest abode for a time in the cases in which they are packed. I should, of course, be pleased to have some of my works sold abroad, not for the money, but because I wish others besides my countrymen to see them. It is because I go my own ways that I do not sell my works, and after my death Iceland will certainly not sell them.

It is strange to see how artists are bound together in their activity. In my opinion, nothing is more dangerous to art than tradition. I have lived in Italy, Hungary, Austria, Bavaria, Germany, England and Denmark, and have seen various art collections in these countries. Always I have seen the same, the ghastly tradition and routine which rules them all, and which spreads like a death-bringing slime over all young art. Only those—or almost only those—who follow the beaten tracks receive authorization. Only what is known before is bought, and against that there is nothing to say, for people want only what they can enjoy—that is, what they know before—the old ideals, and usually even the old ideals in old forms. Moreover, if an artist becomes fashionable—and I know of nothing worse—

he will have a flock of pupils and imitators. Rodin, for example, is worthy of all honor, but look at all the imitators of him that have shot up like mushrooms. Schools of art are impossible, and there ought not to exist forerunner or follower in art. For it should come from within, and not entirely from without. It should be an expression of the personality itself. Yet I repeat that I respect all sincere art, even when it is founded on tradition.

FAIRMOUNT PARK ART ASSOCIATION

Office of the President—510 Ludlow St.

Philadelphia, December 22, 1920.

J. Bunford Samuel,
1609 Spruce St.,
Philadelphia.

Dear Mr. Samuel:

At the stated meeting of the Trustees of the Fairmount Park Art Association, held on the 10th instant, a minute was adopted, that I now have the privilege of transmitting to you.

*MINUTE.*

"The President stated that the dedication of the Statue of Thorfinn Karlsefni, erected in Fairmount Park, the gift of J. Bunford Samuel, Esq., a member of this Association, had taken place on November 20th last, the ceremonies participated in by the Commissioners

of Fairmount Park represented by President Stotesbury, with other members of that body, the officers and members of this Association, as also a notable delegation of Scandinavian authorities from New York and elsewhere.

Mr. Samuel in person presented the statue to the city of Philadelphia through the agency of this Association and the Commissioners of Fairmount Park.

The Board desires to recognize at this time the very generous act of Mr. Samuel in thus anticipating its receipt of the trust from the estate of his wife, the late Ellen Phillips Samuel, and to assure him that all of our citizens fully appreciate this noble addition to the attractions of the Park, to be associated for all time with his honored name.

The Board further notes the hospitality extended by Mr. Samuel to friends and visitors on this occasion, an action tending to support the reputaton Philadelphia has earned in the past, which it is hoped the example thus shown may be an incentive for others to follow."

With cordial regards, believe me,

Very sincerely yours,

Charles J. Cohen,

President.

*Reply to above letter.*

Dear Mr. Cohen:

I am in receipt of the copy of the Minutes adopted by the Fairmount Park Art Association on the 1st of

December and feel very gratified that the Statue of Thorfinn Karlsefni was so acceptable to your Association. It has afforded me an education in Statuary that I never could have acquired without application to the subject. I am,

Yours sincerely,
J. Bunford Samuel.

## THE NORSE DISCOVERERS OF AMERICA: THE WINELAND SAGAS.

Translated and discussed by
G.M. Gathorne-Hardy, F.R.G.S.

Since Nansen's slashing attempt, in 1911, to rob the Vinland sagas of their historical reliability, four important works on the Norse voyages have appeared, none of which have shown any disposition to accept his chief contentions. These works are by Hovgaard (1914), Fossum (1918), Steensby (1918), and the volume under consideration. Only one of these investigators (Steensby, of Denmark) agrees with the Scandinavian scholars Storm and Jonsson that the Saga of Erik the Red is a more reliable record than the so-called Greenland narrative of the Flat Island Book. Fossum and Gathorne-Hardy believe with Hovgaard that "both accounts.....may probably be considered as essentially historic and essentially of equal value." It must be admitted that these three open-minded investigators, without any pretensions to expertness in textual criti-

cism, and relying largely on common sense, the contents of the sagas, and detailed knowledge concerning the north Atlantic lands and coast-lines, give the philologists a hard run; while Nansen, with a wealth of research in a dozen fields of learning involved in the Vinland controversy, is definitely vanquished. Gathorne-Hardy deftly contends, in his common-sense way, that "the successful colonization of Greenland is an historical fact, and its story is chronicled in precisely those sagas which are here under consideration with regard to Wineland." This general refutation is followed up by a detailed and comprehensive investigation, presented in such an eminently fair and reasonable spirit, that the critical reader is led to believe that the final verdict on the vexed questions of this controversy, where specialized knowledge in so many fields has been invoked, will be given by laymen.

So far as the essential historicity of the Vinland sagas is concerned, Mr. Gathorne-Hardy, erudite in Old Norse historical lore, and with ample geographical knowledge, makes a distinctive contribution by piecing and dovetailing the two discordant sagas into one harmonious story—seemingly a hazardous process from the standpoint of the average scholar, but the result is effective and convincing. Nothing is lost to the header, however, as the eliminated parts are gathered in an appendix, following the reconstructed story. Professor Hovgaard seems to have first suggested this dovetailing process,

but Mr. Gathorne-Hardy has executed it without any suggestion from his predecesor.

Though the four authors cited above agree in being convinced of the historical accuracy of the Vinland sagas in their main features, they come to pronounced disagreement on the question of the landfall of the voyagers. Steensby (a professor of geography in the University of Copenhagen) and Fossum (an American philologist) both contend for the lands on either side of the estuary of the St. Lawrence River, making very plausible arguments; while both Hovgaard and Gathorne-Hardy place the most southerly points reached within the boundaries of the United States, the former placing the ultimate point in Rhode Island, while the latter pushes on to the western end of Long Island and the mouth of the Hudson River.

This disagreement seems to indicate that the problem of establishing a landfall is unsolved and unsolvable. And Gathorne-Hardy, despite the detailed presentation of his argument, concedes in his introduction that "the geographical details can probably never be settled with absolute finality."

Apart from the question of the landfall, the volume in hand is a readable and convincing book on the actualities of the Vinland voyages. It has both an adequate bibliography and an excellent index.

Julius E. Olson.



STATUE OF THORFINN KARLSEFNI IN FAIRMOUNT PARK, NOV. 20, 1920.

## DEDICATION OF STATUE OF THORFINN KARLSEFNI

The ceremony took place at 3 P.M.

MR. J. BUNFORD SAMUEL: The President and members of the Fairmount Park Commissioners and Mr. Charles J. Cohen, President of Fairmount Park Art Association and Ladies and Gentlemen:

The romance concerning the adventures of Thorfinn Karlsefni is thrilling. Historians say but little about him, with the exception of Fiske, who admits there was such a person as Thorfinn, and after reviewing his voyage to Vineland in 1007, says, "Taking the narrative as a whole, it seems to me a sober, straightforward and eminently probable story." Yet later on he says, "It is in the highest degree probable that Leif Ericsson and his friends made a few voyages to what we know to have been the coast of America, but it is an abuse of language to say that they discovered America." It seems to be a greater abuse of language to say that the story was eminently probable and then add that it is an abuse of language about the discovery.

The motive of my erecting the statue of Thorfinn Karlsefni, the Icelandic explorer, was two-fold:—

First, to start as it were, in addition to the bequest made by my late wife, Ellen Phillips Samuel, who left a fund for the erection of Statuary and Fountains in the

Park, through the agency of the Fairmount Park Art Association; and,

Secondly, to see whilst I live, how the first statue would look placed in the situation selected by my wife for the first eighteen statues.

In selecting Thorfinn, I only did so after three years of research work here and abroad to find out who came nearest to the ideal, and facts seem to have borne me out in my choice.

I was fortunate in securing the Icelandic sculptor, Einar Jonsson, to model the statue, and think his conception and dressing of the statue is very ably and artistically done.

I believe in environment, especially in representing an Icelander by an Icelander. The natives of all countries have their peculiarities, which sculptors living out of the country cannot faithfully reproduce.

The motto on the shield reads:—

"From the Island of the North, of the ice and of the fire, of the flower covered villages and the blue mountains, the ever radiant sun, and the dimness of the dream, one of the houses of the Goddess of the Northern light."

It may not be amiss to state that the wife of Thorfinn, named Gudrid, assisted him by her fortitude whilst sojourning in the wilderness.

I wish to thank the Commissioners of Fairmount Park for their courtesy in fitting up a studio in one of

the Park buildings for the sculptor, and in placing the foundation for the pedestal.

As the statue at the time it came from the foundry was formally accepted by the Fairmount Park Commissioners, I trust the Fairmount Park Art Association will follow in my footsteps when they receive the Samuel bequest and maintain the high level of art in the erection of the seventeen statues to follow. (Applause)

MR. COHEN: Mr. Samuel, Members of the Fairmount Park Art Association and Guests: It is a privilege to greet you in Philadelphia, and we are appreciative of your presence on this auspicious occasion.

On behalf of the Commissioners of Fairmount Park, the City of Philadelphia, and the Fairmount Park Art Association, in accepting this munificent gift from Mr. J. Bunford Samuel, it is desired to acknowledge the generosity of the donor in thus himself beginning the work of erecting the memorial not only by his addition to the funds available but with the corresponding saving of time, as well as the service he has rendered by his initiative with his advice and counsel in determining the character of the memorial and of the actual completion of this noble statue.

Mr. Samuel's wife, the late Ellen Phillips Samuel, was a niece of the Honorable Henry M. Phillips, well remembered as one of the most public spirited men of his generation occupying many positions of honor and trust in our community.

Mrs. Samuel had shown a deep interest in the welfare of the Fairmount Park Art Association and the project which she had so much at heart was shared by Mr. Samuel, and owes much to his sympathetic and cordial coöperation.

This representation of the Icelandic explorer is the initial figure, to be followed by the erection of seventeen of similar proportions, all to be emblematic of the history of America and to stand one hundred feet apart, thus making a splendid adornment to our Park. And then, for future generations the income from this endowment of over a half million dollars will be available for the erection of fountains and other works of Art, thus beautifying this public domain, with which for all time will be associated the names of the generous donors, Mr. and Mrs. J. Bunford Samuel. (Applause)

I now have the privilege of presenting to you Dr. Leach, who represents the American-Scandinavian Foundation in this country.

DR. LEACH: Mr. President, Mr. Samuel, Ladies and Gentlemen: I don't know why I have been chosen to represent the delegation which has just come over from New York, because I am the junior member of the whole party. We have with us today the Honorable George Bech, Consul General from Denmark and Iceland. We have Dr. Halder Hermannson, of Cornell University, the greatest Icelandic authority in this country. We have also the Editor of the leading Norwegian



PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN IN BOARD ROOM OF PARK COMMISSIONERS NOV. 20, 1920.

paper in America, the Editor of the leading Swedish paper, and the Editor of the leading Danish paper. We also have a representative from Princeton University, Mr. Malone, who has just returned from a visit to Iceland.

We are here today, ladies and gentlemen, in the presence of what may be called an *historical event.* We are not here to honor Columbus, or Amerigo Vespucci, or Leif Ericsson, but we are here to do honor to an almost forgotten *pioneer*, the first pioneer to attempt to plant a colony on the mainland of America.

Statues have been erected before to these other gentlemen; even Leif Ericsson has a statue to his memory in a prominent place in the City of Boston. It was the voyage of Leif Ericsson to our shores which aroused the interest of the Scandinavian colonists in Iceland and Greenland to come to this Vineland of the sagas which Leif Ericsson has described to them.

About the year 1002 Thorfinn Karlsefni came over from Iceland, a member of an old Icelandic family, and married a sister of Leif Ericsson; and he was the most serious of those who in those early days of the eleventh century set out from the shores of Greenland, to seek that more fertile land, which their fellow countrymen had described to them.

Three winters, according to the sagas, he spent here somewhere in North America. No man can point out with exactitude the place where he planted his colonies.

Only this last summer, a great Danish geographer, Professor Steensby, came over here and, on foot, went down the Coast of Labrador and along the north and south shores of the St. Lawrence River, and thought that he at last, like others before him, had found where Leif Ericsson and his three ships and one hundred and sixty associates spent those three winters. Will it ever be possible, by finding a stone or the foundation of a house, to point out with precision just where on our shores these colonies were planted?

It is, indeed, a curious coincidence that a stone found near Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, at the end of the 18th century, and interpreted in various ways, has in one interpretation been designated as a runic inscription made by a member of Thorfinn Karlsefni's expedition; and this interpretation was made by no other than an American scholar, Henry Phillips, Jr., a brother-in-law of the generous donor of this memorial, a distinguished citizen of your city, Mr. J. Bunford Samuel.

This little expedition of Thorfinn's spent three winters here. They encountered the usual vicissitudes of the early colonists. They had hunger to compete with, they were troubled with the cold, but one of the most serious difficulties was the natives, the Skraelings, as they called the Indians or Esquimau, whoever they may have been. These strange people were chased off, in one of their attacks, by a woman. The natives had never seen a European woman before, and she seemed

very terrible to them. In this new world a son was born to Thorfinn, named Snorri, probably the first white child to be born in the new world. For three years they tried it out, then they had to give it up, and they went back again to Ericsfjord in Greenland, to the Scandinavian colony there.

Thorfinn, whom you see here nobly represented in this statue, was a representative, a dauntless member of that intrepid race of Northmen who re-peopled England and gave to Normandy and to the world the highest type of administrative race of the Middle Ages. He was a member of the republic of Iceland or, more closely defined, a citizen of the Free Law Courts of Iceland and Greenland, and it is very fitting that his likeness should be interpreted in bronze by his fellow countryman, the greatest living Icelandic sculptor of our day, Einar Jonsson; and I am persuaded that this City of Philadelphia and this glorious park of yours, as well as the memory of Thorfinn Karlsefni, are honored by this great, and virile, and imaginative example of modern Icelandic art. (Applause)

MR. COHEN: I now have the privilege of presenting to you Dr. Halder Hermannson, Professor of Scandinavian languages in Cornell University.

DR. HERMANNSON: Ladies and gentlemen: It is a great pleasure to me, and great honor, to represent my native land on a memorable occasion like this, when the statue of an Icelander by an Icelander is dedicated on a

foreign soil. I think the selection of this man, Thorfinn Karlsefni, is particularly fortunate. He is, more than any other, worthy to be commemorated by monument.

You see him before you there in armor, but he was not one of those men of his day who made war his business. He was an enterprising merchant, a laborious farmer and experienced sailor, and a courageous explorer of unknown lands. It may not be exactly fitting to represent him in armor, because he only put on armor when he had to defend his life, or his family or friends, or else his liberty and his lands.

He was a representative type of man who made a settlement of Iceland possible, and it is upon the kind of man that he was that the future of the new Icelandic State depends. It has been doubted very frequently, but most pepole who have read history have come to the conclusion that it was a historical fact. I, myself am absolutely convinced that he actually came to this country, and since he was the first of his countrymen to reside in this land, he might well serve as a model for those of his countrymen who have come later so that they, like he, may devote themselves to peaceful occupations and only when the occasion arises and they are compelled to, they may shoulder the gun and defend their liberty and the land of their choice.

I am not going to deliver a long speech here to you. I am merely going to express my gratitude and that of my countrymen to those who have erected this statue,

and above all, to the generous donor of it, and the Fairmount Park Art Association of Philadelphia, who have given it a place in this beautiful park here. It will remind future generations of Thorfinn and of his nativity, and I trust that this statue and the memories which are connected with it will form in the future a bond of sympathy and friendship between the small and the great, between one of the greatest nations on earth and one of the smallest, between America and Iceland; and that it may also be a reminder of the accomplishments of small nations and of their contributions to civilization, and may cause the strong and powerful to protect the rights of the weak and small.

In conclusion, allow me to express my thanks for the courtesy shown Iceland by the erection of this monument, but also for the interest which the government of the American people has shown the Icelandic people during this last year of difficulties and trouble, and allow me to convey the heartiest greetings from the Icelandic people to the American nation. (Applause)

MR. COHEN: The ceremonies are now concluded and, on behalf of Mr. Samuel, you are invited to come inside the club house.

ADJOURNMENT

*The following are extracts from letters recently received regarding the inscription on the Fletcher Stone—*

Donneybrook, Dublin Co.
25 February 1922.

Dear Sir:

I have received your letter of the 10th inst. and carefully studied the enclosure, which I return. Whatever the Yarmouth inscription may be, it is certainly not any form of Celtic.

Nor do I believe that it is Runic, some of the letters have a superficial resemblance to Runic letters, and indeed there are characters resembling Greek and old Semetic letters among them. This, however, I feel is purely accidental.

As to the interpretation suggested in the accompanying paper. In the first place "Haki's Son Addressed The Men" does not seem at first sight a very probable thing for any one to write on a stone. In the second place, there are more letters in the transcript than there are in the Inscription. In the third place, no Rune writer would perpetrate a sentence so full of grammatical errors. Haco's Son Addressed—rather Warned The Men would be written.

If the Yarmouth inscription be not a modern scribble by some illiterate person, and it looks preciously like H'y Williams, as it would be distorted by someone work-

ing on an unaccustomed material, it must be some production of Indians, like the rock scribings collected by Garrick Malley in the Publications of the Bureau of Ethnology 1888-89.

It cannot I feel sure be taken as an ancient European record.

Very faithfully yours,
R.A.S. Macalister, F.S.A.

Smithsonian Institution
March 13, 1922.

Dear Sir:

I have your letter of March 11th enclosing a brief article on supposed Runic Inscriptions, and asking my view regarding them, and in reply I beg to quote from the report of Dr. I.M. Casanowicz, Curator of Old World Archeology in the United States National Museum to whom the matter was referred, as follows:

"The signs of the Nova Scotia stone have no equations in any of the Runic Alphabets—Nordic, Gothic or Anglo-Saxon, nor can they by any stretch of the imagination be made out to be Semetic characters."

As to whether they are of Indian orgin, I can really say nothing save that, since we know of no other occupation of the region than Indian, they probably are their work.

They are, however, not like any characters known to have been used by the Indians, in fact they may not have been characters at all, in the sense of significant inscriptions.

Sincerely yours,

W. H. Holmes,

Director.

This book should be returned to the Library on or before the last date stamped below.

A fine is incurred by retaining it beyond the specified time.

Please return promptly.

CANCELLED

DEC 16 1978

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